

Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District

2020 Annual Report

Courthouse, 600 6th Street #7
Madison, MN 56256

Established: April 19, 1971

Included Counties: Lac qui Parle, Yellow Medicine, Lincoln

Website: www.lqpybwatershed.org



Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District Mission Statement

To serve as a partner in water planning and management with the State Agencies, Counties, Cities, & Soil & Water Conservation Districts and assist with the management of water quality and quantity within the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed boundaries.

History of the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District

The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District was established on April 19, 1971. The purpose of the District was to aid local citizens who had requested help in controlling flooding in the Watershed. Much cross-over flooding had occurred over farm land between sub-watersheds, and had been identified as the highest priority need for the new district to address.

The District as it currently exists consists of approximately 1,712 square miles with 976 in Minnesota and the remaining 736 in South Dakota. Approximately 74% of the land surface is located in Lac qui Parle County, 19% in Yellow Medicine County, and 7% in Lincoln County.

The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District starts out at Lake Hendricks in Lincoln County. The Lac qui Parle River flows northeastward through Yellow Medicine and Lac qui Parle Counties before entering the Minnesota River near Watson into Lac qui Parle Lake. In the first 60 miles of drainage, the elevation drops more than a thousand feet from the Prairie Coteau. Major tributaries of the Lac qui Parle are the Florida, Canby, and Ten Mile Creek Watersheds.

The original Watershed District Plan was established, as required by law, in October 1972. The second update of the 10-year management plan was approved by BWSR in 2009. In 2019, the Watershed District requested an extension to their management plan as they finish WRAPS and work towards One Watershed One Planning. This five-year extension was granted.

The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District currently is governed by Minnesota Statutes 103D, which provides a broader scope for a local unit of government to manage quality and quantity of water within the hydrological boundaries.

OFFICE:

The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District Office is located at:

Courthouse, 600 6th Street, Suite #7, Madison, MN 56256



Office hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.
Phone: 320-598-3117

Website: www.lqpybwatershed.org
Fax: 320-598-3125

MEETINGS:

The Board held twelve (12) monthly meetings and four (4) special meetings in 2020. Our regular meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month starting at 4:30 p.m. The January – March meetings were held in the Lac qui Parle County Commissioners' Room, Courthouse, 600 6th Street, Madison, MN. The April & May meetings were held virtually via a "ZOOM" platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The August -November meetings were held in person and virtually (due to not being able to meet with more than 10 people) and these were held in the Lac qui Parle County Annex Emergency Operations Center, 422 5th Avenue, Madison, MN to have room for social distancing. The December meeting was held virtually using the ZOOM platform. Notification for meetings are published in the Western Guard, Canby News, & Hendricks Pioneer Press, along with a radio announcement on KLQP 92.1 FM. Notices were also e-mailed to the local agencies, Auditor's & Commissioners of each County. The meeting date was also posted on the District web-site. The public was invited to join virtually via "ZOOM" to all meetings following the COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak.

WEBSITE:

The District website www.lqpybwatershed.org is user friendly and allows the Watershed Board & staff clearer communication with the public. The web-site also enables District staff to post upcoming meeting information, projects, and download various forms for the public to fill out prior to visiting the office. The Watershed Districts' [FACEBOOK](#) page is used to reach a wider demographic of people in our Watershed District.

Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District

2020 Board of Managers' & Attorney



Sitting - Left to right: David Ludvigson, Attorney Matt Haugen, Darrel Ellefson, David Craigmile, Michael Frank, & John Cornell

A Board of Managers governs the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District. The Lac qui Parle County Commissioners appoint three managers, the Yellow Medicine County Commissioners appoint one manager, and the Lincoln County Commissioners appoint one manager to serve a three year term for the Watershed District.

2020 OFFICES AND TERMS OF THE MANAGERS OF THE DISTRICT

<u>NAME</u>	<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>TERM-END</u>
Darrel Ellefson	Chairman	Dawson, MN	Lac qui Parle County	03/31/2021
John Cornell	Vice-Chairman	Canby, MN	Lincoln County	03/31/2021
David Ludvigson	Treasurer	Madison, MN	Lac qui Parle County	03/31/2023
David Craigmile	Secretary	Boyd, MN	Lac qui Parle County	03/31/2022
Michael Frank	Publicity	Canby, MN	Yellow Medicine County	01/01/2024

District Staff:



Trudy Hastad, Administrator



Mitch Enderson, Coordinator



Jared Roiland, Ditch Inspector

The District maintains a staff of three full-time employees and one park manager to carry out the works of the District. This staff consists of Trudy Hastad, Administrator, Mitchell Enderson, Coordinator/WCA delineator –in-training, and Jared Roiland, Ditch manager/inspector. The Office's for the Administrator, Coordinator, & Ditch Manager are located in the Lac qui Parle County Courthouse. The Watershed District also has a park manager, Ron Fjerkenstad, who lives on-site at Stone Hill Park/Del Clark Lake. The Park office is located in the house, on-site, at Stone Hill Park/Del Clark Lake by Canby, MN.

2020 Advisory Board:

Ron Antony
Joseph Drietz
Roy Marihart
Darwyn Bach
Dale Sterzinger
Chessa Frahm
Harvey Swenson
Nate Ludvigson
Roger Ellefson

Yellow Medicine County Commissioner
Lincoln County Commissioner
Lac qui Parle County Commissioner
Yellow Medicine County SWCD
Lincoln County SWCD
Lac qui Parle County SWCD
Lac qui Parle County Ag Producer
Lac qui Parle Contractor
LQP Pheasants Forever/Local Surveyor

The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Advisory Board met virtually via "ZOOM" on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting opened with nominations for Chairman & Recorder as per M.S. Chapter 103D.331. Harvey Swenson was appointed Chairman with Dale Sterzinger as Recorder. The Board was updated on current projects in the Watershed and asked for comments, concerns regarding Watershed activities. Manager Craigmile gave a small power point of various parts of interest in the Watershed. The minutes from the meeting are attached.

Legal Services:

The District obtains the service of Attorney, Matt Haugen, with the law firm Nelson, Oyen, Torvik for general legal counsel. Attorney, John Kolb, with the Rinke Noonan Law Firm is on retainer and handles the District's legal ditch counsel.

Operating Budget:

A public hearing was held on September 3, 2019 (meeting #595) to approve the 2020 levy & budget of \$290,000 of which \$250,000 is approved via MN Statute 103D.905 Sub. 3, and \$40,000 via MN Statute 103D.905 Sub 9 (1). Lincoln County Commissioner Joe Drietz attended the public hearing. There was no opposition to the levy or budget as presented, so the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed managers approved the 2020 levy of \$290,000 along with the 2020 budget.

LQP-YB Watershed Drainage Systems:

The Watershed Board of Managers are responsible for overseeing the maintenance and repair of the following drainage systems in the Watershed District:

LQP Watershed Ditch #1	LQP Lateral A of Watershed Ditch #1
LQP Watershed Ditch #2	LQP Lateral A of Watershed Ditch #85
LQP Watershed Ditch #81-82	LQP Watershed Ditch #88-1
LQP Watershed Ditch #32	LQP Watershed Ditch #92
Lincoln Watershed Ditch #11	Lincoln Watershed Ditch #55

The Construction for the Lac qui Parle County Ditch #54 Improvement project started up in June after shutting down in November 2019 due to wet conditions. Construction was completed in November 2020 with the final close-out to be done in early 2021 after engineer review of the camera footage and Watershed final approval.

The Lac qui Parle County Ditch #42 Improvement project was bid electronically September 3, 2020 with one bid received. The bid was rejected at the special Watershed meeting with ZOOM option on September 9, 2020 as the bid was 47% over the engineer's estimate. The project was re-bid electronically on October 27th with three bids received and the low bid accepted at the November 4th, 2020 board meeting with ZOOM option. The contractor is looking at starting the project in January 2021 weather permitting.

The Watershed Board of managers received a petition for realignment of a portion of WS #11 Branch 2 in October of 2019 with an engineer appointed in December 2019. The petition also sought to modify the original 2002 order to allow future maintenance of the ditch to be performed as a drainage system expense. The final engineer's report was received in June of 2020 with the final hearing held via ZOOM in August 2020. The Watershed Board of managers modified it's 2002 order and authorized future maintenance of the drainage system modification to be performed by the drainage authority at the expense of the drainage authority contingent on the petitioner's payment of all costs in the proceedings.

Permits for Drainage:

In 2020, the Board approved 368 permit applications. There were 315 permits issued in Lac qui Parle County, 41 in Yellow Medicine County, and 12 in Lincoln County. Permits were issued for main tile, seepage tile, ditch cleanouts, culvert replacement, terracing, & alternative intake replacements, 638 projects, & pumps. The Board requested a detailed map of the completed project be sent to the office to be filed with the approved permit application when project is completed.

The Board has a permit program in place to help ensure wise development and conservation of the District's water resources in accordance with the District's watershed management plan. Work that requires a permit from the District may not be undertaken until a permit is issued. Obtaining a District permit does not relieve an applicant from the responsibility of obtaining all other required Federal, State, and local permits. All applicants for a District permit must be submitted on the District's application form along with maps, drawings or plans that adequately depict the proposed project and information required by the application form. The District does not currently charge a permit fee. The Board reviews all permit applications at the regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board may add reasonable conditions to the approval of a permit to address site-specific or activity-specific concerns. The requirements of any other permission (NPDES permit, wetland determination, public water permit, etc.) required for the proposed activity are incorporated into the District permit. A violation of other required permits is a violation of the District permit.

LGU – Wetland Conservation Act:

The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed managers are the LGU for the WCA program in Lac qui Parle County. In 2020, the LGU approved 368 watershed permits and staff reviewed approximately 315 applications for wetland impact and approximately 75 additional various inquiries were conducted. Approximately fifty activities known to be exempt were not issued formal decisions, and twenty-five additional permits were given restrictions such as setbacks. Cropping history was requested with three permits to verify eligibility for an exemption. Twelve permits were instructed to contact DNR due to the presence of a Public watercourse or basin. Eight permits deemed not eligible for an exemption were provided Joint Applications for Activities Affecting Water Resources. One potential violation was reported. A Resource Protection Notice was issued to the site and proceedings to develop a restoration order were initiated.

Four wetland boundary applications were approved to be used for bridge replacements under the Local Road Replacement Program. Another boundary application was approved to be used in an Ag Bank application. Two applications for Replacement of Ag Wetland Impacts were approved. A final application for a No-Loss was approved for installation of an equalizing culvert. Two exemption applications were submitted but not yet decided upon as of 12/31/2020. One bridge application and the No-Loss application were issued extensions to allow for site visits. Another application that did not indicate what was being applied for was withdrawn after being notified of an incomplete application. Five potential bank sites were inquired about, including one potential Ag bank site submitting a boundary application, and another location submitting a Draft Prospectus. A release of 12.8609 credits was deposited into bank account number 1641. End of the year monitoring reports were received for both existing bank sites.

Lac qui Parle County Ditch Maintenance:

The Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed managers & staff have been responsible for the maintenance of the 101 Lac qui Parle County Drainage Systems since 2007. The Lac qui Parle County Commissioners remain as the Drainage authority and contract with the Watershed District for the maintenance. This arrangement has worked out well.

In 2020, the Watershed staff received 83 requests for maintenance on the Lac qui Parle County Drainage systems. These were for ditch cleanouts, sinkholes, tile repairs, line replacement, culvert replacements, crossing washouts, inlet repairs & nuisance beaver dam removals. Contractors have been very backed up with work in our Watershed area and has been a challenge to get some of these repairs completed, but they are slowly getting caught up due to good weather conditions in the summer/fall 2020.

In 2019, the drainage authority hired H2Overviewers to complete redetermination of benefits on County Ditch #4, Br 1 & 2 of CD #4; Br 4 of CD #4; Lateral A of CD #4, Lateral B of CD #4; CD #20, Branch 2 of CD #20; Br 5 of County Ditch #15, County Ditch #10, County Ditch #44, County #45 and County Ditch #24. The redeterminations were completed in August of 2020 with landowner packets mailed the 1st week of September. The week of September 14-18 was set aside to answer landowner questions and concerns virtually prior to the twelve final hearings held virtually via "TEAMS" on November 19, 2020. The Board held the twelve hearings virtually one after the other and this worked well. Landowners could call in or join the hearings via "TEAMS". The redetermination of benefits of the twelve above listed ditches were all approved.

The redetermination of benefits for Judicial Ditch #21 is still in process waiting for the local viewers information. This ditch is shared with Yellow Medicine County. We re-sent DNR the public waters permit application and survey data for outlet channel cleanout on CD #79 and CD #83 in the fall of 2020 and are waiting for their response before we can complete this project.

We continue to work with FEMA on the 21 ditch sloughs due to the flooding in the spring of 2019. In 2020, we were able to complete 13 of these sites and FEMA granted an extension to complete the other eight sites in the spring of 2021. Staff have worked diligently with the Railroad for two outlet repairs for Judicial ditch #4. This project will hopefully be completed in the spring of 2021 once final permits are received from the Railroad Authority.

Staff completed the Drainage Records Modernization Grant and the maps are uploaded to MN Geospatial commons and on the LQP County website under GIS info. Staff continue to record all repairs and legal proceedings into Drainage DB.

BUFFER ENFORCEMENT:

The Board of Managers agreed to take on the enforcement of the Watershed Ditches in which they are the drainage authority. Eight of these ditches are in Lac qui Parle County and two are in Lincoln County. There were no non-compliant parcels on the Watershed Ditches.

The Lac qui Parle County Board of Commissioners contracted with the Watershed to enforce the Lac qui Parle County Buffer Ordinance for Lac qui Parle County. In 2020, fines were imposed on one landowner for non-compliant public waters in Lac qui Parle County. The landowner has not paid his fines for 2020, or contacted the SWCD to work to install the buffer, so the fines will be put on the landowner 2021 property taxes for collection. At year-end there was one landowner and one parcel not in compliance with the ditch buffer in Lac qui Parle County. In February 2021, the APO's will be sent if still not in compliance. Staff worked with the SWCD and County Attorney to amend a portion of the Lac qui Parle County buffer ordinance to address parcels that were compliant, but have since been put back into production.

Nuisance Beaver Program:

In 2020, the Watershed District paid cost-share on 221 nuisance beavers and no dam removals. The District funds a nuisance beaver program to help deter overland flooding and stream bank erosion caused by beaver dams in streams and ditches in the Watershed District. In 2020, the Board again authorized 75% cost-share up to \$250 per beaver dam removal and \$20.00 per nuisance beaver with a total budget of \$5,000. The District requires paperwork be submitted with landowner signature and description of where and how many nuisance beaver are trapped. The front feet of each beaver must be turned into the District prior to payment being made. The trapper must be in compliance with DNR rules & regulations.

Tree Snag Program:

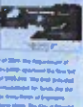
The Watershed District authorized \$5,000 to be used towards tree snag removal. The Board approved up to \$2,460.00 for tree snagging in the river in section 17, Garfield Township, Lac qui Parle County in 2020.

WRAPS:

The WRAPS grant was completed in the spring of 2020. Staff were able to create, and install interpretive signs at Hendricks, Dawson, & the LQP County park. These signs turned out very well and even have an area for posted notices, etc. Staff also created and had two banners made. The annual canoe trip was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dawson Rock Rapids

In early 1998, the Division had already been recovering from a major flood that had caused significant damage to the area. The rapid recovery was due to the fact that the area had been protected by a levee system that had been built in 1993. The levee system had been built to protect the area from flooding and had been built to a standard that was higher than that of the area that it was protecting.



The map shows the location of the Dawson Rock Rapids area and the surrounding area. The map is color-coded to show different areas and features. The map is a topographic map of the area, showing the location of the rapids and the surrounding area. The map is color-coded to show different areas and features.

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Lac qui Parle River Headwaters



Inset identified in this region of the Lac qui Parle River and the regions being of water control for the watershed, with 1, 2012, & areas located to South Dakota and NE & states in Minnesota.

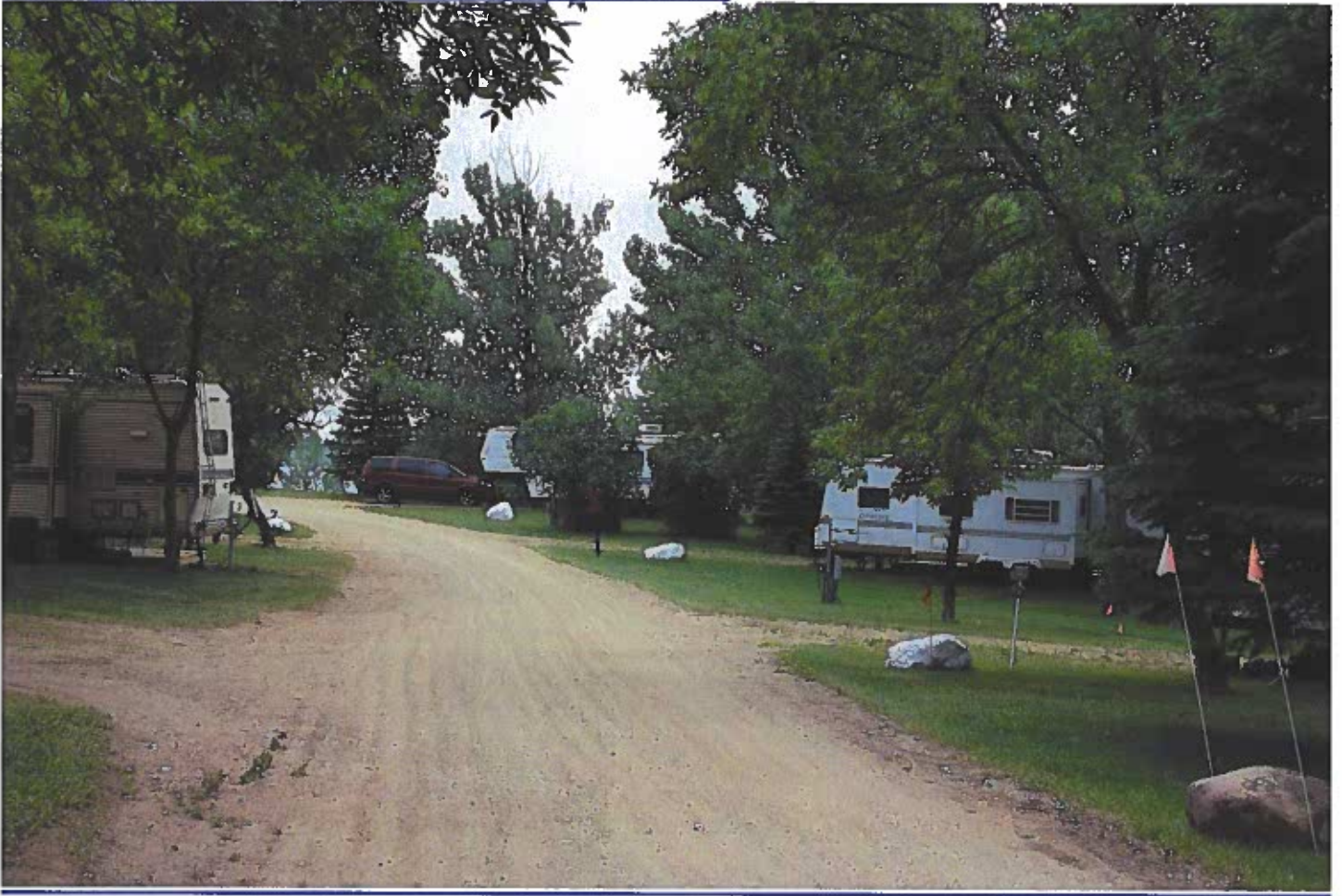


Lac qui Parle River watershed
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This is one of four signs made possible as part of the Lac qui Parle River Watershed Assessment and Protection Program (LWAPP) project. LWAPP is a statewide program that assesses the environmental health of the watershed and identifies key locations for water quality improvements and watershed strategies for improved water. This ongoing work of the Lac qui Parle River is important for fish & macroinvertebrate health, life, food, habitat, and tourism. Restoration and protection strategies developed through LWAPP will not only protect water and riparian habitat, but also ensure that improvements and protect from others.



STONEHILL PARK & DEL CLARK LAKE:



STONEHILL PARK



The (R-1) dam known as Del Clark Lake was built in the fall of 1985 as part of the Canby Creek Project to prevent the City of Canby from yearly flooding that cost thousands of dollars of damage annually. This dam is one of the largest earthen dams built in Minnesota. To get the cost/benefit ratio for the project, the Watershed District was required to include a recreational area which was named Stonehill Park/Del Clark Lake. Stonehill Park/Del Clark Lake offers a handicap accessible dock and pier, one of the few in the State of Minnesota. The lake is 154 acres and has a maximum depth of 30 feet. The park and lake remain a popular tourist destination. Ice-fishing is a very popular activity in the winter months.

The park currently has 69 campsites. Area A has 33 sites with 28 of them being seasonal and 5 spots open for weekend/week campers. Area B has 6 spots open for weekend/week campers, and "the Glenn" is used for seasonal spots. There are five spots available in the overflow for weekend/week campers as well. Seasonal camp sites were filled in 2020 with a waiting list. The overflow and camp sites are filled most weekends. This continues to be a popular spot to camp, swim, fish, relax. The Watershed District hires a manager who is required to live on site in the park house/office, and hire three-four seasonal employees. The camping season begins May 1 and ends October 1 each year.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 the park did not open up until May 28th and it was for seasonal campers only with the bathrooms remaining closed. Covid-19 guidelines were followed and signage was posted to wear masks, and to follow social distance guidelines. Porta-potties were rented for the beach area. The park re-opened to campers in June (following COVID-19 guidelines), but the bathrooms at the beach remained closed with porta-potties used for the season, and the main campground bathrooms were opened for the season.

The City of Canby sponsored the 2nd annual fishing tournament in January 2020 on Del Clark Lake with a huge turnout of fishermen and approximately 125 ice-houses on the lake. The ever popular 4th of July parade for the campers and slip-in-slide was cancelled, but the fireworks display was still held with COVID restrictions in place. The main road to the campground was named "Beecher Lane" in honor of long-time manager Willis Beecher who passed away in May, 2020.

One Watershed One Plan (1W1P):

Staff worked with the local SWCD's, BWSR, & Counties to move forward with the 1W1P Planning Grant Application in 2020 with the grant awarded. Resolutions were received and a steering committee was set up. Staff also worked with local partners in the Upper Minnesota Watershed to incorporate a boundary change for the 1W1P. This boundary change was submitted to BWSR and approved. The boundary change consisted of moving the Yellow Bank portion back to the Lac qui Parle 1W1P area.

Education and Outreach Activities in 2020:

- In mid-March the Watershed office was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff worked from home until the middle of May. Staff & managers learned how to do virtual meetings and staff were able to keep up with day to day activities once we got home office's set up and bugs worked out of the system.
- Twenty-three failed septic systems were upgraded in 2020. Staff applied for an additional \$400,000 from the State as requests keep coming in for upgrades on failed systems.
- Bid opening for the Del Clark/Canby Creek grant project was delayed most of the 2020 year due to waiting on CORP approval. We finally received approval in November 2020 (which took over ½ year). Bid opening is set for January 2021 with construction to start in the spring of 2021.
- Staff worked on updates for the Emergency Action Plan for the Canby Creek Dams.

- Hayland/pasture bids were received and awarded for a three-year contract in February. The Board of Manager's approved fencing on Lazarus Creek and R-6 and this was done in May 2020.
- Staff worked with DNR and local partners in LQP to submit a basic application to restore Florida Creek to its' original channel. The group didn't expect to get funded this year, but felt it was important to submit a basic application to get on the DNR's scoring team's radar. It usually takes a couple years to get funds for something like this according to DNR staff.
- The Board approved contribution to LQP County for the 2020 spring aerial imagery flyover. This has a 3" resolution and we use this imagery in our daily office work.
- The LQP-YB Watershed and Yellow Medicine Watershed District partnered and split the cost-share on the Halverson dam repair in Section 32, Stoney Run Township. This dam benefits both watersheds.
- We continue to contribute with local partners for maintenance for the stream gauge on the Yellow Bank River near Odessa.
- The Watershed contributed to the Campbell Radar Water level sensor on the LQP river by Dawson.
- Our annual photo contest was held with photo's used to promote the Watershed. Prizes were given for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place.
- The Watershed purchased a ROXOR to use for buffer, ditch, & wetland inspections.
- Staff attended BWSR academy virtually.
- Staff attended the Annual MAWD meeting virtually.
- The Watershed Office located in the Lac qui Parle County Courthouse received a new look due to the COVID pandemic as the County Environmental staff were moved to what used to be the County Commissioner room. This allowed for the Watershed staff to have their own office with six- foot separation between staff. The room was rearranged, screens were put up on the counter and some desks, hand sanitizers were added, the TV was mounted on the wall to project maps for customers to help keep staff & customers safe. Masks are worn when not at our desks. Staff took turns working from home and office, with only one staff in the office from the middle of November until the New Year.
- It was a very hectic, busy year. We have learned to do things very differently. Our meetings, hearings, conferences have all been done virtually. This poses some challenges, but also has saved money and time in traveling, hotels, & mileage.

Upcoming Projects:

- Partner with our respective local units of government within the Watershed to complete the “One Watershed, One Plan” planning grant
- Continue to expand use of Prioritized, Targeted and Measureable as criteria for Goals and Objectives in the next water management plan as appropriate.
- Use PTMapping and SAM modeling to prioritize BMP’s that enhance water quality within the Watershed District.
- Oversee construction of the Canby Creek/Del Clark Lake Protection Grant.
- Continue with education programs such as the weekly radio program, photo contest, canoe trip, Earth Day event, and working with local schools, 4-H groups, & Ladies groups.
- Provide 15% cost-share for building and repair of private retention structures to help with hydrology management.
- Continue working with landowners to upgrade private septic systems thru the SSTS Low Interest Loan thru MPCA. These needed upgrades will enhance water quality within the Watershed District. This is a great program and we continue to get requests for this loan.
- Provide \$20.00 incentive for nuisance beaver in the Watershed and 75% cost-share up to \$250 for beaver dam removal.
- Promote and continue the Volunteer Citizen Monitoring & Rain gauge monitoring program.
 - Adjust the current permit application form to promote conservation practices be in place to aid with water management within the District.
- Continue working with partners for the restoration of Florida Creek to its original channel.
- Oversee the construction of the CD #42 improvement project.
- Complete and sign-off on the CD #54 improvement project.
- Continue to oversee buffer compliance & buffer education for the Watershed and Lac qui Parle County.
- Continue to contract with the Lac qui Parle County for their ditch maintenance.
- Look for new and different ways to engage the public in water management within our Watershed.